



PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The relationships we cultivate in our lives are essential to our psychological wellbeing. It refers to how people evaluate their lives. Social relationships – both quantity and quality affect psychological wellbeing. Research has consistently found that favorable exchange with one's proximal social environment has positive effects on psychological wellbeing. The aim of the study is to systematically review quantitative studies exploring associations of social relationship with Psychological wellbeing.

KEY WORDS: Psychological wellbeing, Social relationships.

INTRODUCTION:

Human beings are social creatures, we are not just in the trivial sense that we like company and not just in the obvious sense that we each depend on others. We are social in a more elemental way: simply to exist as a normal human being requires interaction with other people. It is in our nature to form social relationships. To reflect our fundamental need to belong psychologist Roy Baumeister developed a theory: "need to belong". This theory argues that we are each born with a drive to seek, form maintain and protect strong relationship. To fulfil this need, we seek relationship with those at work, at school in our communities and in other social contexts. If we have to reflect on the best moments of our life, chances are that they involve other people. We feel good sharing our experiences with others and our desire for high quality relationship may be connected to a deep-seated psychological impulse.

Benefits of Social Relationship:

Social relationship being very specific rewards. The rewards they bring are emotional, material, and physical health. In terms of emotional rewards, our relationship give us emotional support and encouragement in difficult times. They also give us happiness. Interacting with friends is fun, relaxing and enjoyable because our friends entertain us. Additionally, we receive material rewards from our social relationships. People we are close to can help to meet our material needs for money, food, shelter and transportation. When we feel close to someone we tend to share these resources in times of need. Further our social relationships bring health rewards. They actually help us to stay healthy. The more social relationships someone has, the greater the person's ability to fight with diseases. The presence of social relationships depicts the appropriate psychological assets or resources.

Psychological Wellbeing:

Psychological wellbeing refers to how people evaluate their lives. According to Diener (1997), these evaluations may be in the form of cognition's or in the form of affect. The cognitive part is an information-based appraisal of one's life that is when a person gives conscious evaluative judgments about one's satisfaction with life as a whole. The affective part is a hedonic evaluation guided by emotions and feelings such as frequency with which people experience pleasant \unpleasant moods in reactions to their lives. The assumption behind this is that most people evaluate their lives as either good or bad so they are normally able to offer judgments. Further people invariably experience moods and emotions, which have a positive effect or a negative effect. Thus, people have a level of subjective well being if they do not often consciously think about it and the psychological systems offer virtually constant evaluation of what is happening to the person. Therefore, Psychological wellbeing is a topic of particular interest because of the extended impacts it has on other areas of wellbeing, including physical, cognitive and emotional (Canevello & Crocker, 2011, Huppert, 2009, Reis-2012).

Types of Psychological wellbeing:

- 1) The term "Hedonic" wellbeing is normally used to refer to the subjective feelings of happiness. It comprises of two components, an affective component (high positive affect and low negative affect) and a cognitive component (satisfaction with life). It is proposed that an individual experiences happiness when positive affect and satisfaction with life are both high (Carvethers & hood, 2004)
- 2) The less well-known term "Eudemonic" well being is used to refer to the purposeful aspect of psychological wellbeing. The psychologist Carol Ruff has developed a very clear model that breaks down Eudemonic well being into six types of psychological wellbeing

- a) Self acceptance
- b) Environmental Mastery
- c) Positive relationship
- d) Personal Growth
- e) Purpose in life
- f) Autonomy

Psychological wellbeing depends on early experiences and underlying personality but everyday experience can help to maintain a good level of psychological wellbeing.

Social Relationship and Psychological wellbeing:

Perhaps the strongest link of psychological wellbeing is with social relationship. Much prior research considered supportive social relationship to be one of the strongest outcomes of subjective wellbeing (Frisch, 2005; Moore & Diner, Oishi et al., 2007). There are several accounts that attempt to explain this link. Functional accounts of emotions propose that affect guides behavior, including social behavior, by providing informative evocative and incentive functions that shape our behavior and interaction with others over time (Keltner & Haidt, 2001; Keltner & Kring 1998). Positive emotions such as happiness, enjoyment, contentment, pleasure and excitement inform the individual that their activity is going well and would be worthwhile to repeat in the future. The corresponding positive feelings reinforce the behavior such that they are more likely to happen again. The evocative function refers to those activities that one engages in with others such as play games or conversations, which are shared interactions and build social bonds between people. A related theoretical account for the link between positive feelings and social relationships is the broaden and build theory proposed by Fredrickson (1998; 2001; Cohn, Coffey, Pek & Finkel, 2008). Fredrickson argues that a primary reason for experiencing positive emotions is to broaden and build resources for the future especially under future times of distress. When we are in positive mood, we are able to invest in our social relationship and build a strong, supportive, social network that we call upon in the future. Thus, positive emotions allow us to build those close relationships that are useful under future threats.

Overall one of the strongest associations with psychological wellbeing is one's social relationships. Those with high positive affect are more social and have higher quality relationship with others (Eid, Riemann, Angewitter & Borkenau, 2003). Happy individuals report having more friends, engaging in more social activities and spending more time talking with others compared to their less happy counterparts (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Over time, happy individuals report spending time engaging in more fun and active interactions with others as well as in necessary informational types of interactions (Vittengl & Holt, 1998). Positive affect is generally positively correlated with friendship (Cheng & Furnham, 2002). Thus, those with more positive affect tend to report better social relationships but also are choosing activities and behavior that seem to build their relationship as well. Not only do happy tend to report better relationship themselves, but others also report higher quality relationship with them as well.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Several studies suggest the special importance of subjective aspects of support

(perceived support or support satisfaction) in relation to psychology wellbeing (Barrera, 1981; Hirsch, 1989; Procidano and Heller, 1983), Barrera (1981) concludes that knowledge of people's objective appraisals of the adequacy of support is more critical to the prediction of their psychological wellbeing than simply collecting information about the number of supporters or the quantity of supportive behaviors to which they have access.

Donald and Ware (1984) concluded that subjective ratings of being 'cared for' and loved and wanted by others are substantially related both conceptually and empirically to mental health. A deficient social support system may increase vulnerability to mental illness.

Smith and Hobbs (1966) and Hibbard (1985) observed that mental illness is not the private misery of an individual but it is intrinsically tied to the breakdown of natural resources of social support in the individual's life involving family, job, friendship and religious affiliations. The relationship between social ties, being more trustful of others and perceiving more control are all related to having better psychological wellbeing.

Barrera (1981); Hirsch (1980); Procidano and Heller (1987) observed that satisfaction with support or perceived adequacy of support has shown a stronger relationship to distress or wellbeing than the social support network measures.

In a study on Patterns of Social Relationship and Psychology wellbeing Elderly Keiko Takahashi, Juno Tamura (1997) found that there were no differences in psychology wellbeing between family dominant and friend dominant participants, but those who lacked affective figures had lower scores in psychological wellbeing than did their family dominant and friend dominant counterparts.

Jessica Kinsky (2017) reviewed in her study the benefits of high subjective wellbeing (high positive affect and life satisfaction and low negative affect) for health, resilience work performance and social relationships.

Study on Social relationship and psychological wellbeing rheumatoid arthritis, Ray Fitzpatrick & Michael Shipley (1988) found that more diffuse social relationships were strongly correlated with psychological wellbeing.

Reis (2012) found that the presence of social support and positive relations were the most frequent source of happiness among human beings because of their social nature, while the absence of social support and positive relations were related to psychological distress.

Burns & Machine (2013) found that social relationship were a better indicator of psychological wellbeing than life events.

CONCLUSION:

The social support and positive relations found in healthy relationship consistently show that relationship are the most potent predictor of psychological wellbeing (Reis 2012). Fredrickson (2009) went so far as to state that "flourishing is not a solo endeavor" and "nobody reaches his or her potential in isolation". In essence, social relationship are vital for flourishing. Umberson, Chen, House, Hopkins and Slater (1996) discovered similar findings demonstrating that supportive relationship are associated with lower levels of psychological distress. Burns and Machin (2013) found that social relationship were a better indicator of Psychological wellbeing. Commitment within a relationship can determine the importance of forgiveness, which in turn has been found to be related to psychological wellbeing (Karremans, Van Lange, Kluwer & Quwerkerk, 2003). It was found that forgiveness in a relationship impact as the psychological wellbeing of partners with a strong commitment to one another more than partners who are less committed to one another. When individuals perceive being valued by others and feel valued, they experience positive increase in Psychological wellbeing (Canevello & Crocker, 2011).

We can conclude that there is no single secret to psychological wellbeing but there may be a recipe and if so good social relationship would be ingredient.

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